

# God, our Brother Man

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A Lecture by

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# GOD, OUR BROTHER MAN.

**I**F we look at the interests of mankind throughout the ages, we shall find a curious fact, that at certain epochs in civilization interest is concentrated on understanding the nature of God. Many a great philosophy is then studied, and the principal object of man seems to be to unravel the mystery of the Divine Nature. But soon afterwards, perhaps a few centuries after that epoch when man is supremely interested in God, mankind turns away from the problem of heaven and how to get there, to attempt to understand the problem of man and his ways in the world. A new fascination is discovered in human nature; for some generations a great interest is shown in the relations between men, in bettering them, in what is called "social reform." That period, where man holds the centre of the stage, also comes to an end after a few generations, and once again the pendulum swings away from man to God. From God to man, from man to God, so the pendulum swings in the history of mankind.

We stand to-day at such an epoch where the pendulum is turning. Look back at your grandparents, and consider what were some of the principal interests in their lives then. They were not so very keenly interested in politics; there was very little then suggested of change in human institutions, in social reform in other words, and so one of their very great activities was in connection with the Church. They found fascinating problem after problem with regard to God's nature, and how man was to save his own soul. But look at the world to-

day; go into any bookshop or look at any bookstall, and you will find nearly all the literature deals with man's activities in one or other of its many phases. Some of you must have noted how within the last three or four years certain firms in London have been issuing great works in monthly parts; but what are their subjects? Peoples of the world, the races of the world, the civilizations of the world; for men have found a new interest in the far-off races of mankind. Look at our typical magazines which are not superficial, but which deal with the more serious things. Suggestion after suggestion for bettering human conditions is there discussed. A new era has begun where man is less interested in God and more in man.

Why has there been throughout the ages this swing of the pendulum from God to man, from man to God? Because there is an intimate relation between man and God. That of course is taught in the religions of the world. In religion we are told that man was created by God and therefore is God's creature. But the real fact which underlies that statement, the true relation, is something far more profound. That relation is stated in those well-known words that God "created man in His own image." The true fact is that man has a great link with God, not only as the creature of God, but also as the revealer of God. Indeed, all that humanity knows of God is known because of man. All the highest concepts which we have to-day concerning God's nature came to us from man. They came to you from the Christ, who if He was God, was still man; it is because He was a man and revealed His manhood that we are able to grasp some faint idea of His Divinity. All through we have that supreme fact; we know of God because of man. We have said that God is Love, but why? Because we men and women have experienced Love, and some have come to such heights of loving and of sacrifice that to them if God exists He must be characterised by that human attribute.

We have the striking fact that man has revealed God, but he has done so only because he has Divinity within him. It is because of this stupendous fact—that man is not simply the creature of God, a thing of clay which God has breathed into and made a living thing, but because he contains within himself the Divine—that man has revealed God and can always reveal Him. This doe-

trine of the Divinity of Man is perhaps known in the clearest fashion in India, for it is integral in Indian philosophy that man is not only man, but contains within him Divinity; they do not say he is merely a seed or germ of Divinity, but full Divinity, if only he could know and realize.

This, I might incidentally remark, was also once upon a time the teaching of your own religion. To you, to-day, the great Christian ideal is the salvation of the soul; but there were days when in addition to the "salvation" of the soul, a completer ideal was presented. It was the Deification of the soul, that man should put on a Divine Vesture and partake of the nature of God. That teaching as to the divinity of man slipped away from Christianity during the Middle Ages, but it has come back again. Perhaps the most profound change which has taken place in Christian thought during the last fifty years is that slowly there has been interwoven into Christian thought that old, old doctrine that man has within him the nature of God. The doctrine manifests itself in all kinds of expressions. Christian Science is one form in which that idea of the divine nature in man is found. The gulf between man and God is abolished in New Thought more clearly, for in it you have a continual emphasis laid upon the idea that in mortal man exists a divine immortal nature. You will find that church after church is slowly nibbling at this idea, that man exists not merely to be "saved", but to realize a more intimate relation to God as a revealer of the divine nature.

So then it is not at all surprising, when we inquire into the problem of man, to find that what we call "man" is not merely the clod and the brute, but that there is in him something wonderful and stupendous. In these days, largely under the powerful impetus of materialistic science, we teach that man has ascended from the brute; but slowly once again we are coming to a realization that man is descended from the Angels. It is that supreme fact which any one of you can ascertain for yourself, if you will step out of the deadening grooves of orthodoxy, and accept the larger thought represented by Theosophy and all the allied movements throughout the world which proclaim the new ideas, which are in reality the old, old ideas. You will discover for yourself that there is a new hope for mankind, because man is other than we have thought him.

In the past God has revealed Himself as man. It is an integral part of your own faith, that Christ, born of woman, who lived as we do, revealed God. In Hinduism they say of Shri Krishna, born of woman, a man among men, that He revealed Divinity. In ancient Egypt it was Osiris; in other religions which teach the existence of God, an individual who was born of woman, who possessed the human nature, revealed God, for his human nature contained the Divine.

God was revealed by a few great leaders of humanity—the Founders of the great religions. We are willing to admit that, because they stand so head and shoulders above ordinary humanity in goodness. We accept that they were the Sons of God, that they were God incarnate. But in the past history of humanity, the divine nature was not found only in just those few Saviours, the flowers on the tree of humanity. The divine nature was found in men and women such as you and I. Let me point out very briefly what has happened in certain civilizations of the past, and how those civilizations are characterised by a particular mode of the discovery of Divinity in man.

I will first take the way that in the past in India, and to some extent in the present too, they discovered God in man. It was in man the Teacher. When through purification, through lofty understanding, a man born of woman put on the robe of the Guru or the Teacher he revealed God. To all who looked to him, his disciples, he the Guru, the Teacher was God, and they revered him not merely because of his human goodness, but because in him Divinity stood more revealed. Every day when the pious Hindu begins his meditation and thinks of his human teacher, he says in Sanskrit, "Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Shiva, Guru is Parabrahm Himself." It is as if you were to say in your Christian thought, "My Teacher is God the Father; my Teacher is God the Son; My Teacher is God the Holy Ghost." Such was the training of the imagination in India, such was the mode of lifting the veil which covers our humanity, that the Teacher in India revealed the attributes of Divinity.

Pass next to Greece; there men were supremely interested in the problem of man; it was a Greek philosopher who summed up all that is possible along that line of in-

terest in the statement that, "Man is the measure of things." Now in Greece there was a very curious mode of the discovery of God in man. It was in the youth. It was in the young man from about seventeen to twenty-one, gracious in manner, perfect in build, the athlete, pliant in his imagination, it was in that tender bud, the youth, that the Greeks saw Divinity reflected. That is why in Greek civilization they surrounded themselves with the statues of athletes. It is utterly strange to us to-day. To-day the nude male figure means nothing to us. We garb it in the ugliest clothes and when a man's body is naked, especially the white body, he is very naked indeed, and there is nothing beautiful, nothing graceful for us in him. We cannot believe that there is anything divine in that body of corruptible flesh. It was utterly different in Greece. Such was their quality of intuition, such was the mirror that the Greek civilization held up to the Greeks, that they saw the God in man in the perfect youth.

Let us pass on a few centuries, and then we find that Christianity has revealed a new way. In the middle ages of Europe, in the days of chivalry, we have another mirror held up, and God is seen revealed in the maiden. God was worshipped in the church, but in addition to God at the altar the lover worshipped God in his beloved. It was that glimpse of Divinity, which he saw in the maiden whom he loved, which inspired him to greater strenuousness in the search for God. This way is still characteristic of Christian civilization, and the knowledge that God reveals through the maiden is not altogether forgotten in western civilization.

And so quite apart from the great Founders of the religions, in India the teacher was the incarnate God; in Greece the youth was the mirror of God; and in the days of chivalry the maiden revealed Him. But now there is a new world. All the old landmarks are disappearing one by one; there is scarcely any religion which is not in a manner adrift on the waters of truth, scarce knowing where to anchor. When in these days you cannot fill the churches with sermons about God, you can fill lecture halls with talks about man. And why? Because once again, since the pendulum is swinging away from God to man, we are discovering the divine nature in man. But not now in the teacher, or in the youth, or in the maiden. The mystery of the divine revelation goes on unfolding

new and ever new marvels, and two new ways are now fast appearing.

There is one new way of seeing God in man, which is possible even already to some, and that is to see God in the child. We have not as yet thought of the child as a mirror of the Godhead. But we find that every country is now discussing child-welfare. A new interest has been found in children not merely because they are to build up the state as citizens, but because there is something fascinating, beautiful, attractive, inspiring and spiritualising in children. The country which has begun to discover this marvel about the child earlier than any other people is England. Within the last few years, the English have developed a keen interest in the child. They have found a wonderful beauty in the child, a fascination which did not exist before. Take a typical British paper, British in its conservatism, but also British in its sympathies, and so happily a mirror of some of the best things of English life. Buy at any bookstall the last number of "Punch" from London, and you will find in that number at least one and perhaps two drawings of children, picturing their graceful gestures, their wise sayings, their startling comments on life.

Why are they put there? Because in England there is a dim intuition beginning that in the child there is more than the mere charm which pleases us, something inspiring, uplifting and purifying. If you will train yourself rightly in these days, and take the advantages that the great changing world offers you, if you will go and look at a crowd of children playing, you will find that something of the load of sorrow in your life will be lifted as you delight in watching their play. Look into a child's face, and now and then you may hear God's whisper as you so look. For children are slowly becoming the mirror of the Godhead in the coming civilization.

Side by side with that, there is coming a realisation that each man, each woman can become the mirror of God. That is the supreme spiritual fact for us all to realize to-day. Our whole world is now in travail. Why has there been a ghastly war? Why have the old civilizations been shaken to the foundations? Why is the rigidity of the East and the exclusiveness of the West being broken down? Why are there means of travel,



why are there printing presses, so that we know now the culture of other races? Because mankind is about to begin a great search, and that is for the discovery of God in man. Why is it that in forty-nine years a Theosophical Society, which was started to bring the East and the West together in a common search for spiritual truths, should have spread in country after country, until there is scarcely a country in the world where Theosophical ideas as to the Brotherhood of Man are not becoming powerful in the press and on the platform and in the Churches? Because the World Spirit, which is the power of God as it works in mankind, is fashioning new images for us in which to see Divinity reflected. These new images He is making by myriads, and they are the men and women around us. In these days we can see God in our Brother Man. That is the supreme adventure, because if you can gain some glimpses of God in another you will realize Him in yourself. For you too have the divine nature within you. If you can greet the splendour of Divinity without you, in that very act of salutation there is released in you the strength to bear all your burdens, and sufficient wisdom to see the next step onward on your path.

How then, shall we find the God in man? It has to be done by our understanding man, by watching what it is that in man inspires us. You will find that what inspires us in man are the emanations, the flashes of the Divinity which is in him. Consider the hero. Why is a person heroic? Because he has released the hidden power of the God in him, and because he has released that hidden Divinity we salute the Divine as the hero. So saluting, we ourselves make the first step towards the achievement of a heroic life. The hero is to be saluted, admired, imitated, because the hero is God. Heroism manifests when people dare the hardest thing in life, choose the greatest suffering for the sake of a cause, for the love of an ideal.

Let me tell you what some centuries ago one Indian woman did. I tell you the story in order that you may go behind the outer story and see the fire of Divinity in man. This woman was a queen, and after a long resistance against the invading Mohammedans her husband's fortress was about to be captured. But before the capture, when defeat was utterly sure, the warriors, as was

the custom of the time, banded themselves together and made a sortie out of the gate, right in the face of the enemy, so as to be slain in battle. For it is the duty of one who is born in the fighting caste to be killed for duty. Such a death they taught in India is the entrance to heaven. So all the men, seeing that there was no hope, rather than acknowledge the conqueror, for that was dishonour, determined upon what was voluntary death. And the women knew their lot, for when the castle was sacked they would be led away into captivity. No high born woman of the fighting caste would ever contemplate such a fate. And so Queen Padmini called upon all her women, and they went into a cave in the fortress and they blocked up its entrance, and then built a great fire within. There they immolated themselves on the pyre, preferring death to losing their honour as the wives of noble warriors. That was not a small thing to do, for after all even as a captive there was life; but there was a greater thing than life, and that was honour. Where men give their lives for honour, then manifests the spark of Divinity in them.

Sometimes the divine nature shines out in the martyr, in such a man as was Father Damien, the Roman Catholic priest who simply and quietly volunteered to live among the lepers, knowing that sooner or later he would catch the disease and become a leper himself. He gave his life for those suffering people, for after several years he caught the disease himself; he lived with them as an outcast and he died an outcast. As such a man goes out to his long martyrdom, what is the power in him which makes him contemplate slow torture of body and the ghastliest of deaths, and yet stand unmoved because of an ideal of service? It is the Divine in man which contemplates such a death and says, "I cannot die; the only death is when I do not serve."

Look too at some beds of pain here in this city; here and there you will find a person quite serene, however tortured his body, showing a quality of resignation, a perfect trust and a strength, which radiate from that bed of pain and helplessness. If you are despairing and will go to the bedside of such a person, you will go away charged with strength. Whence comes that strength which is in him? It is once again the divine nature coming out in the man, in the woman. Look into many a home,

into the life of many a drudge, who does his or her daily duty not merely with a spirit of resignation, but with something more, a spirit of consecration. It is the Divine in us which makes no complaint, asks nothing more than to do duty well, not even asking for a smile of recognition, but has the conviction that a duty well done to make life easy for another is itself the highest blessing that life can give.

It is in the people round you, in the hero, in the martyr, in the drudge, that you will see something of the nature of God. Here in Australia you as a people have already had some glimpse of the God in man. Let me read to you from your own history that is being written of the great war, "The Story of Anzac." In that work there is one page which ought to be lifted out and blazoned in golden letters as your great contribution to the coming civilization.

"The typical Australian had no respect whatever for the possessor of money as such. The whole tendency of his individualism had been to protect the weaker member. While the sympathy of the American was usually for the strong, that of the Australian was for those who lacked advantage. He was seldom religious in the sense in which the word is generally used. So far as he held a prevailing creed, it was a romantic creed inherited from the gold-miner and the bushman, of which the chief article was that a man should at all times and at any cost stand by his mate. This was, and is, the one law which the good Australian must never break. It is bred in the child, and stays with him through life. In the last few moments before the bloody attack upon Lone Pine, in Gallipoli, when the third Australian Infantry Battalion was crowded on the fire steps of each bay of its old front-line trench waiting for the final signal to scramble over the sand-bags above, a man with rifle in hand, bayonet fixed, came peering along the trench below. 'Jim here?' he asked. A voice on the fire-step answered, 'Right, Bill; here.' 'Do you chaps mind shiftin' up a piece?' said the man in the trench. 'Him and me are mates, an' we're goin' over together.' The same thing must have happened many thousands of times in the Australian divisions. The strongest bond in the Australian Imperial Force was that between a man and his mate. No matter how hardened a sinner against camp rules, how often in trouble at the 'estaminet,' an Australian seemed never to fail in the purely self-imposed duty of standing by his wounded friend whenever his task in the battle permitted him to do so. In the foulest French winter, or at Cape Helles, when bullets seemed to be raining in sheets, on every occasion when an Australian force went into action, there were to be found men who, come what might, regardless of death or wounds, stayed by their fallen friends until they had seen them into safety."

Why this new sense of attachment to the mate, to the chum, not a beautiful person to outer appearance sometimes? He may be much weaker than you are,

even handicapping you, holding you back in many ways; but why this strange new discovery that one of the greatest things in life is to be true to your chum? Because in your chum is Divinity. And it is because you have seen the Divinity in the younger, in the weaker, that you stand by him to the end.

And so, you see, in all kinds of ways it is possible to discover God our Brother Man. But if we are keen on that discovery, we must see that we do not shut ourselves against the discovery. Because we can erect barriers, we can pull a veil over our eyes, so that when God manifests in all His beauty we are blind. There are certain things in our civilization to-day which can prevent our discovering God our Brother Man, and one of them is prejudice of race and colour. Every one of you when thinking in general of the principles of life must know that God is "no respecter of persons", that God is not the God of the white race, that God is not the God of the British Empire only, that He must have such a love, such an inconceivable tenderness for all that has come forth from Him, that He is the God of all mankind. If there is one God, then there is only one Humanity, and the distinctions of race and creed mean nothing at all to God.

So then, if you would find God, you must tear this veil of prejudice of race and colour from your eyes. Beware of that veil. Sometimes religion puts up barriers which prevent the discovering of God outside our race. You must break all barriers down, and greet God as He will reveal Himself to you in the face perhaps, who knows, of a Chinaman? As God reveals Himself in His own time and in his own way, your duty is to stand ready to greet Him with no barrier between you and Him. Happily we are slowly transcending the barrier of sex; to-day in civilization we are slowly training ourselves to recognise that the greatness of life which we have revered hitherto in man is equally in the woman. Happily too, in these modern days of breadth of thought, some, a minority perhaps, who are changing the thought of the world, have risen to the discovery that the great spiritual truths of life are not in one religion only. We must step by step break down all barriers. The barriers are for children; they are relics of a time when mankind could not stand up alone, realizing its own Divinity. Then

it was necessary in order to induce men to do their duty, to make them believe that they were the elect of God, that the British race, or the Jewish race, and others each in its turn, was the chosen of God, that the Christian or the Mohammedan was the chosen of God. All these narrowing teachings were the little props which supported mankind at one stage, when man was like the child who cannot stand up, and must cling to something to feel the strength of his limbs. But the soul who is strong does not want limitations of religion or race or colour. He stands ready to greet God as God, as the Divine comes to him through all races, through all faces.

One further truth there is for us to know. Do not think that God will only reveal Himself to you in what you think are the great and glorious and inspiring deeds of humanity. Sometimes so thinking we turn our backs on scenes of suffering and degradation. They repel us. Let nothing repel you, for even in suffering and degradation there is something too of the divine nature. Contemplate the sufferings of mankind, let your heart go out in pity all the time, for "pity is the touch of God in human hearts, and from that way He ever trod He ne'er departs." Enlarge your heart so that it is pitiful to all that lives, so that there is no suffering you are not willing to share. In suffering there awaits you the lesson of pity, and pity is a power which helps you to sacrifice in a larger way. You will find that even on beds of pain and sickness, even in the degraded man or woman, in the haunts of sin and vice, there is for you an inspiration. Do not turn your back on life in any of its phases. That does not mean that you must yourself sin, that you must succumb to temptation. You cannot help the weaker if you fall as he does. But look at the weaker not as having less of the divine nature, but as in some way struggling to rise out of the mire into the realization of his Divinity. You who are strong, you who have a greater realization of humanity and Divinity, do not stand away from the fallen because his robe is muddy and yours is white and clean. Rather be contaminated by his mud, as you help him, because you are strong and he is weak; be one with him and help him to rise out of the mud.

It is in these ways that you will discover God our Brother Man. And the supreme wonder of life is this, that out of a million faces, out of a thousand races, the

great mystery, the wonder of God, is manifested. Open your eyes, my brothers, look at the streets, look at the faces of men, break down every prejudice which you have, look with clear vision on your brothers who are suffering, who are toiling, look on your brothers who are achieving and you will see in their faces, and in the faces of little children, God our Brother Man.



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4. The candidate must be a member of the Society for at least one year.

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